Ku Klux Klan

As found in *Storm*, the official newspaper of the Dutch SS, October 29th, 1943, page 8

The "Imperial Wizard of the Knights of the KKK" kisses the flag; on the left is the "Flaming Cross"
Photos: Associated Press Archive

One of the most original manifestations of militant Americanism—in other words, of the unadulterated aggressive nationalism of the United States—is undoubtedly that of the secret societies, which make their appearance in the life of the young American as early as college, both among whites and among negroes, in the form of the fraternities and sororities - how far these secret societies are regarded as an element of political life there became evident to me during my first visit, at the beginning of the First World War.

It was in Philadelphia that my attention was drawn to something so unusual for a European: a parade through the city by the "Shriners".
Along the avenue of skyscrapers there marched over the gleaming asphalt a remarkable sort of army, theatrically attired, advancing rhythmically in long ranks eight abreast under the command of mounted leaders; strange banners were carried in their colourful ranks, together with slogans upon brightly coloured transparencies, mysterious emblems, symbolic devices, and fluttering pennons.
All this was intended to impress upon the uninitiated spectator the "venerable" secrecy of the Shrine.

Here, an American Masonic organization passed by in full regalia.
Their exceedingly curious uniform was, to say the least, picturesque: a blood-red tarboosh, or fez, with a low-hanging tassel, the colour of which differed from one division to another; a loose mantle reaching below the knees, such as the Negus of Abyssinia was accustomed to wear, and white gaiters over half-boots, with a toy dagger at the side.
These parade-loving Shriners belong to a high degree of American Freemasonry, to which only men of social standing are admitted.

Since they are said to be the spiritual fathers of the Ku Klux Klan, they deserve more detailed attention here: every year they gather in a different state for a demonstrative national convention, where they feast heartily, drink liberally, and deliver speeches.
And these Shriners are by no means an ordinary Blue Lodge, nor merely a chapter adorned with blood-red ritual symbolism - no, they are infinitely more important than that—at least in their own estimation.
To them the word "shrine" signifies a sanctuary in the sense of a mausoleum, such as the world-famous monument erected by Artemisia for her husband Mausolus at Halicarnassus: yet neither their outward appearance—nor whatever their ritual may be intended to symbolize—bears the slightest resemblance to such an idea; every Shrine entrance is more suggestive of a mosque, while the interior recalls one of the courts of the Alhambra[1].

No European can understand this American hocus-pocus unless he is familiar with the highly peculiar cultural history of North America, and especially with that form of association which may be likened to the Vehmgericht[2], as it appears, for example, in the romantic history of the European colonization of the United States.
From this developed the secret political societies, such as the "Sons of Liberty" - thus, the political romanticism of eighteenth-century America, the systematic organization of artisans and farmers by the aristocratic Whigs, and the development of corporate student life at America's youthful universities and colleges—these constituted the historically evolved setting for the colourful drama of those secret societies in the revolutionary and ardently youthful America of the eighteenth century.
The village inn where they held their meetings they called "Hampden Hall," as though to emphasize the lofty political character of their aims, although their imitation of the Vehmgericht is immediately apparent.

As early as 1772 there existed in Philadelphia a nationalist society calling itself the "Sons of Tammany"—a forerunner of the powerful Tammany organization of the New York Democrats!—named after the semi-legendary chief of the Delaware tribe.
By the middle of the nineteenth century we encounter the militant "Know Nothings", marking the transition from secret society to political party.
In response to the steadily increasing immigration from Europe, particularly from Ireland, a militant American nationalism of a distinctly anti-Catholic complexion then asserted itself under the slogan: "Americans must rule America."

The four-year Civil War of the United States (1861–65), fought between the "white" states of the North and those of the slaveholders in the South, ended in the victory of the Northerners, or Unionists, and the abolition of slavery; the Jew Levi Coffin, of Cincinnati, headed the great secret organization known as the Underground Railroad, whose purpose was to place fugitive slaves beyond the reach of the law.
After the Civil War, the old habits of violence and of taking the law into one's own hands had more reason than ever to persist in the devastated and exhausted South.

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[1] Referring to Islamic architecture in Spain. - The Uploader
[2] A system of secret tribunals that were active in Westphalia, Germany from the 13th to the 16th centuries. - The Uploader

K.K.K. member sorts his weapons

Political adventurers who, after the war, flocked to the Southern states in order to acquire political influence in Washington with the aid of the negro vote, soon came to dominate their governments; the resistance of the dispossessed Southern whites then found expression in secret organizations bearing fantastic names, such as the “Knights of the White Camelia”, the “Pale Faces”, the “White Brotherhood”, and, more famous than all of these, the old “Ku Klux Klan”.

The remarkable feature of the “Ku Klux Klan” is that, although founded in May 1866 by a small group of young men in a village in Tennessee merely for amusement—”to give the niggers a fright”—it retained the character of a practical joke for fully two years before, by whatever mysterious influence, it became a powerful and dangerous political instrument.
According to Woodrow Wilson’s *History of the American People*, the name is a corruption of the Greek “kyklos” or “kyklops”, the mythological giants with a single eye in their foreheads who forged the thunderbolts beneath Mount Etna; according to others, however, “Ku Klux Klan” is simply an onomatopoeic expression, comparable to the childish “bang, bang, boom.”
The name came to be applied not merely to this particular order. but to all organizations of a similar character, of which the “White Camelia” was perhaps the most important: that society was formed in 1867 in the French-speaking capital of the State of Louisiana and spread with lightning speed throughout all the Southern states of the former Confederacy.

Almost all whites in those states, whether members of the secret societies or not, took part in one way or another in the “Ku Klux Klan” movement.
By moonlight, groups rode through the countryside clad in ghostly white robes, with a small red St. Andrew’s Cross enclosed within a circle upon the left breast, white bearded masks beneath tall pointed hoods of stiff cardboard, and even the horses’ hooves wrapped to deaden the sound.
Whenever they encountered groups of negroes, or met with resistance near their homes, deafening cries were suddenly raised amid heavy pistol fire: the negro is by nature highly superstitious, and that frightened him almost to death; from time to time, a lynching was also organized.

The organization soon spread from district to district, at the same time assuming a serious political character, and it became a greatly feared form of rural Vehm justice: in certain districts the movement occasionally fell into the hands of unscrupulous bandits and outlaws, whereupon it became deadly even to its own members.

The old “Ku Klux Klan”, which had so quickly degenerated, prompted the North to adopt the most vigorous measures of repression.
In 1871–72 a series of legislative measures was enacted in order to crush the secret societies once and for all by the full authority of the state, and to also supervise the elections in the terror-ridden South - the slogan of the “Ku Klux Klan” now became: to protect the white people of the South against injustice from the North and against plutocracy, and to defend the Constitution of the Union Republic.
Its title also assumed a half-mystical, half-political character: the Invisible Empire of the South!
Yet its activities frequently amounted to little more than murder and violence until, after 1872, the government in Washington gradually gained the upper hand.
When the central organization was finally dissolved, the Invisible Empire stood under the command of the “Grand Wizard,” General N. B. Forrest; each Southern state constituted a “Realm” under a Grand Dragon; several realms together formed a “Dominion” under a “Titan”; and so forth; the smallest unit was a “Den,” under a “Grand Cyclops”.

The modern Ku Klux Klan was re-established on Thanksgiving Night in 1915 by William Joseph Simmons, a travelling evangelist, commercial salesman, and, above all, a skilful promoter of secret societies.
Around this “night of re-establishment,” during the war itself, an enormous publicity campaign was organized, while an entirely new ritual feature was introduced: the solemn lighting of a Flaming Cross upon the summit of Stone Mountain, not far from the city of Atlanta in the Southern state of Georgia.
A charter was also granted by that state that actually conferred upon the new organization the legal status of an American corporation.
Thus legally established, the Grand Wizard Simmons, by means of his vast propaganda apparatus, appealed to “the whole civilized world”—that is to say, the United States—to recognize that his organization was above all “a high-class, mystical, social, patriotic, and charitable association,” wholly “devoted to the fulfilment of the sacred duty of protecting our women and upholding the principle of white supremacy”—in short, a duty of genuine patriotism and pure Americanism: its campaign was now directed not only against the negro, but also against the Catholic, and above all against the Jew, who sought to become the leading businessman in the “Black Belt,” that is, the Southern states.

Unlike the old Ku Klux Klan, the revived movement spread throughout the United States during and after the First World War, but in 1928 the organization suddenly suffered a severe setback as repeated scandals, corruption, and the wholesale sale of groups of members to political parties came to light.
A judicial investigation also revealed an almost unbelievable state of degeneration—truly American, in the author’s view.
And the Ku Klux Klan disappeared as quietly and mysteriously as it had arisen scarcely fifteen years before - until when…?

“Only Americans on guard!” - a watch guard during a nightly KKK meeting